



Jeffrey Gibson (American Indian, Cherokee/Choctaw, b. 1972)

Shield, number 1, 2012

Found wood ironing board, deer hide, nails and acrylic paint

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2013.06

Acquired with funds provided by the Barton P. and Mary D. Cohen Art Acquisition Endowment of the JCCC Foundation

Jeffrey Gibson's hybrid work explores both the legacies of his own American Indian heritage and the legacy of Modernism through the lens of geometric abstraction—which, the artist notes, “also has a long tradition in American Indian art history.” For years, Gibson resisted the impulse to quote traditional American Indian art, just as he had rejected the pressure he had felt in art school to make work that reflected his so-called identity. According to the artist, “The way we describe identity is so reductive...It never bleeds into seeing you as a more multifaceted person.” With Gibson's decision to shed the notion of being a member of a minority group, all art, European, American and American Indian alike, became merely “individual points on this periphery around me,” he said. “Once I thought of myself as the center, the world opened up.” In his *Shield, number 1*, Gibson used deer hide, a quintessential material for many American Indian artists, to stitch a skin-like cover for the ironing board frame. The taut hide was painted with geometric shapes of saturated color, a nod to the aesthetics of rave culture, the vibrancy of American Indian PowWows, and the severity of Minimalism.

Jeffrey Gibson received a BFA from The Art Institute of Chicago in 1995 and an MA from the Royal College of Art, London, in 1998.



Do-Ho Suh (Korean, b. 1962)

Some/One, 2004

Stainless steel military dog tags, steel structure, fiberglass resin and fabric

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2003.02

Gift of Marti and Tony Oppenheimer, Los Angeles, CA, in honor of our children

A tall, hollow robe with extended arms, Do-Ho Suh's *Some/One* is composed of thousands of military dog tags that refer to the artist's experience in the military. Suh did two years of compulsory service in the South Korean army, undergoing what he later called "a process of dehumanization." The overlapping dog tags of his sculpture, printed with meaningless strings of roman letters and arabic numerals, emphasize the anonymity of soldiers massed together in a militaristic structure and perhaps, by extension, suggest the subjugation of the individual within any unified social order. *Some/One* evokes the style of a public monument, but without a specific referent. It can be interpreted alternately, or simultaneously, as a monument to a heroic figure, symbolized by the hollow garment, and a monument to the individuals represented by the dog tags. Specially commissioned for the Oppenheimer Collection, this version of *Some/One* differs from the initial one, which featured a skirt of dog tags that spread across the floor and over which viewers were welcome to walk, and a mirrored interior in which viewers saw their reflections. The smaller and more self-contained Oppenheimer work does not invite such interaction, and its blood red interior hints at the vulnerability of the human body, especially in war.

Do-Ho Suh earned a BFA and a MFA from Seoul National University in 1985 and 1987, and he also earned a BFA from Rhode Island School of Design in 1994 and an MFA from Yale University in 1997.



Jarrett Mellenbruch (American, b. 1971)

Haven, 2015

Corian, stainless steel, wood, aluminum, honeybees

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2015.41

Jarrett Mellenbruch addresses themes of community and collective experience in his work. His series of sculptures *Haven* consists of structures designed to house bee colonies located on tall poles in gardens in the Kansas City region and beyond. *Haven's* structure calls to mind iconic images of rural farmhouses, churches, or Romanesque architecture. He intends these works be the beginning of a nation-wide honeybee sanctuary project. Mellenbruch stated in a 2016 interview with the *Kansas City Star*, "I'm a third-generation beekeeper, so I've always been around bees. I've always been interested in science, and in particular, biology, so bees and art are a natural fusion for me. When we lived in New York, I wasn't able to keep bees and I made up for that by reading a lot about them, and that's when I learned about colony collapse disorder and a lot of other problems bees are facing." On his website, he states, "*Haven* is a functioning beehive sculpture that addresses the ongoing decimation of the global honeybee population due to a series of devastating health crises, including colony collapse disorder. Designed to be a nationwide network of 1000 beehives, *Haven* provides safe homes for wild honeybees and raises public awareness of the importance of this pollinator, which makes possible 1/3 of the human food supply." Locations include Kauffman Memorial Garden, Hyde Park, 18th and Broadway, Kansas City Zoo, a private residence in Brookside, and the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA.

Mellenbruch graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design with a BFA in 1993 and earned an MFA from the Maine College of Art in Portland, ME, in 2014.



Clinton Work (American Indian, Kwakwaka'wakw, b. 1975)

Clamming Bucket, 2014

Polyurethane bucket with cedar bark, felt and plastic buttons

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2014.11

Clinton Work was born in Campbell River, British Columbia, and he apprenticed with wood-carver Phil Ashbee. He also worked with many artists in Campbell River and Nanaimo. While Work began as a wood carver in his early twenties, he also began creating jewelry in 2005 and trained under jeweler Kelvin Thompson. Work's art ranges across a wide variety of media including carved drums, masks, bowls, paintings and sculpture. He is also well-known for his large Hamat'sa masks made from cedar bark. Work has started applying a dynamic style, based on the principle of cropping, to many of his carvings as seen in *Clamming Bucket*. The act of cropping, a process of deleting visual data from an image, is highly subjective and alters the context of the original work. The links between cropping and abstraction within the field of two-dimensional art can be traced back to prehistoric times, and became a popular aesthetic convention during the 20th century. The re-framing of original designs and the manipulation of aspect ratios has become more and more popular in American Indian art in recent years. Clinton Work has become known for creating artworks out of single elements from the multifaceted lexicon of Northwest Coast design. Work's innovative application of traditional Northwest Coast Native designs to a decidedly non-traditional material (plastic) unites the historic and contemporary, as his low-relief carving transforms a mundane bucket into a dynamic and visually rich object.